

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Let's Get Started!

Groundbreaking for New Park at Taylor Yard, Bulldozers Ready to Roll

LOS ANGELES – California State Parks and the City of Los Angeles have put park builders and bulldozers on the ground to begin turning Taylor Yard into the newest community park in the downtown Los Angeles area.

State and local officials, along with community members who provided design input for the park, kicked-off the construction work today with a groundbreaking ceremony on the property, located on San Fernando Road, near Elm.

For more than a year, California State Parks, the City of Los Angeles, and hundreds of community members, have been participating in a design process that included many months of public meetings to seek ideas, input and suggestions on what the community wanted in their new park. That community input resulted in three distinct alternatives. Those alternatives were further melded by public input into a single design, a public consensus plan, for the joint City-State park along the Los Angeles River. The construction of that plan is what is now beginning.

"The community input process has produced a gem among parks," said State Parks' Director Ruth Coleman. "This community has pushed for something unique in its beauty and use, something with multiple recreational uses and natural areas, something that will enhance their neighborhoods. We are proud of what they have done and delighted to begin building it."

State Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg said: "I am pleased that my bill, AB 413, signed into law in 2003, helped facilitate this unique city-state collaboration for an urban park that serves the recreational needs of the community. Many of the children that you see here today were infants when their parents were participating in meeting after meeting to turn this site into a much-needed park."

Los Angeles Mayor Jim Hahn said, "After months of collaboration between the City of Los Angeles, the State of California and local community members, Taylor Yard is ready to go. I look forward to visiting Taylor Yard with my own children and enjoying all of the wonderful facilities that the community helped to design."

"The idea of creating park space at Taylor Yard began in the early 1990's with a vision set forth by this community. I recall with great clarity how we envisioned a place where we could someday take our families and our children," said Councilmember Ed P. Reyes who grew up in Cypress Park. "Well, that someday is finally going to happen. No one deserves it more than the residents of this neighborhood."

More than a decade ago, neighborhood and community activists began working toward creating a park at Taylor Yard. After State Parks purchased the property in December 2001, a series of public hearings was held during which members of the public expressed their support for both active and passive recreational opportunities in the new park. That led to discussions between the City of Los Angeles and State Parks to engage in a joint project.

In August 2003, the City and State Parks unveiled the framework for a unique partnership agreement for the cooperative planning and development of a new park. In the arrangement, the State leased approximately half of the 40 acre site to the City for 25 years. The City was charged with designing a local recreational park on their half of the property, while State Parks was tasked with creating a natural and environmental park area on their half. Since then, a series of joint, City-State public planning workshops have been held with community members providing input on what they wanted at the new park site.

The final concept presents the best of what can be found in state and local parks, a seamless and sustainable blend of active and passive recreational activities. The plan has a wide variety of features, including the following:

- Five soccer fields – One regulation, three junior and one multipurpose competition sports field.
- Two regulation tennis courts
- Two baseball fields
- Four regulation basketball courts
- Two entrances to the park off San Fernando Road.
- Multi-purpose trail with distance markers
- Two children's play areas
- Children's water play area
- Short-term area for portable skate-park facility
- River "Ox-Bow" riparian corridor natural area
- Open space, natural parkland area for picnicking, informal ball play
- Bicycle and walking paths
- Group and individual picnic areas
- Natural amphitheater for special events
- Educational panels and interpretative overlook

- Building(s): could include restrooms, community room, concession, service and support.

The construction schedule for the park is as follows:

- Three to six months for grading (dependant on weather)
- One year for construction of park facilities
- Park completed, November 2006

Funding for the park is from a number of sources. On the State level, State Parks purchased the 40 acre property in 2001 for \$29.7 million from Proposition 12, the State Park Bond Initiative of 2000. It is now adding another \$1.5 million toward construction and habitat restoration.

The City of Los Angeles is contributing \$1.5 million from a Community Development Block Grant, \$1.44 million from Proposition 12, \$1.2 million from a Proposition K competitive grant, and \$7.5 million from a Proposition 40 grant (Urban Parks Grant - \$3 million; Murray-Hayden Grant - \$2.5 million; and \$2.0 million from CD 1 Proposition 40 discretionary funds), for a total of approximately \$11.7 million toward design and construction.

Many community members and organizations see this property as one of the linchpin parcels for moving ahead with the goal re-greening the Los Angeles River and creating a string of parks in what would be known as the Los Angeles River Parkway. Another of these linchpin properties is the G-1 parcel adjacent to Taylor Yard and located just upstream. State Parks purchased these 17 acres in December 2003. It is one of the few remaining natural habitat zones where one can get a glimpse of what the Los Angeles River may have looked like prior to channelization.

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